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# How U.S. Internal Security Was Destroyed

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America's recent problems with terrorism, espionage, and other species of subversion are being treated as a terrible dilemma created for us by external forces.

In considerable measure, however, our troubles in this deadly competition have been self-inflicted. There are external forces out to get us, of course, and have been for many decades. But it used to be we had methods for dealing with such adversaries, through the counterintelligence and internal security services of the FBI, CIA and other agencies of government.

Today, that apparatus of self-defense lies in a virtual shambles. As pointed out by Francis J. McNamara in an illuminating new study, *U.S. Counterintelligence Today* (Nathan Hale Institute, 422 First St., S.E., Washington D.C. 20003; \$9.95), we have spent the better part of the past decade abolishing, crippling and demoralizing our intelligence and internal security agencies, cutting back on personnel, and putting blinders on those who stayed.

Among the measures taken to achieve these goals have been abolition of the House and Senate internal security committees, liquidation of the Subversive Activities Control Board and the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations, destruction of police intelligence files, and imposition of constraints on the FBI and CIA.

McNamara, who served for years with the House committee and the SACB, provides a lucid summary of the steps we have taken to cripple our security defenses:

- Between 1972 and 1978, the FBI lost about 1,000 agents, as a result of budgetary restrictions and staff turnover. In the larger intelligence community, total manpower was cut almost in half from 1968 through the latter 1970s. In October 1977, in the "Halloween massacre," Jimmy Carter's CIA director, Stansfield Turner, fired more than 800 officers from the clandestine service.

- Under the so-called "Levi guidelines" (named for President Gerald Ford's attorney general), the FBI was restricted from conducting surveillance of individuals or groups until a crime had been, or was about to be, committed. Since the point of surveillance is quite often to find out if crimes are going to be committed, this, in essence, meant the Bureau had to know the results of an investigation before it could get started.

- The situation got so bad that, according to official testimony, the Bureau could not maintain a file on a self-professed Communist organization, prone to violence, that had openly published its intention of infiltrating the U.S. military. Since this activity was not a crime in and of itself, it fell outside the guidelines and the FBI ignored it.

- The Levi rules and other constraints effectively put the FBI out of business as an internal security agency — where, according to the official figures, it remains today. The number of domestic security cases under FBI investigation dropped from 24,414 in 1973 to 51 in 1983. As FBI Director William Webster observed in the Carter era: "We're practically out of the domestic security field."

- The Levi guidelines further prevented the FBI from taking any sort of preventive action to head off crimes, including those engineered by hostile foreign powers, unless they involved force and violence, threats to life, or harm to "essential" government functions. Restrictions were also placed on dissemination of data about such matters to other agencies of government.

- In terms of personnel security, the Civil Service authorities decided in the 1970s that membership in the Communist party was not a bar to federal employment, even in sensitive positions. The FBI is supposed to do checks to see if such individuals are connected to revolutionary groups, but a bureau spokesman acknowledged in 1979 that it was out of this business, also.

- Thanks to the cut-off of data from police intelligence files and the FBI, the head of the Secret Service testified in 1978 that there had been a 75 per cent reduction in the quality of the information coming to his agency, and that there were cities in the United States the President couldn't visit because the service didn't have the data needed to protect him.

- Similar restrictions have been placed on the CIA in its activities overseas. The agency, for instance, couldn't help out in the kidnapping-murder of Italian leader Aldo Moro in 1978. Nor can it conduct electronic surveillance of resident aliens who travel overseas, even those consorting with agents of foreign powers, because resident aliens are given all the protections accorded "U.S. persons."

In the meantime, the Soviet KGB has vastly increased its "diplomatic" personnel in the United States and at the United Nations, along with tens of thousands of East bloc sailors, cultural exchange "students," and other visitors. The result is that our intelligence forces are badly outnumbered, and fighting with their hands behind their backs. As Judge Robert Morris put it long ago: No wonder we are losing. ■